

COMMUNICATION
to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission
pursuant to Article 23f (4) of the Austrian Constitution
from the Standing Sub-Committee on European Union Affairs
of the Main Committee of the National Council
of 9 June 2020

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**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions:
EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – Bringing nature back into our lives**

Protecting biodiversity serves to protect the very basis of our life on earth. The diversity of ecosystems, of animal and plant species, and the genetic diversity within species provide the foundation for our nutrition and guarantee a healthy environment. Intact ecosystems regulate the climate and offer protection against natural hazards.

According to the World Biodiversity Council, one million animal and plant species worldwide are at risk of extinction. In Austria, half of all amphibians, reptiles and fish, as well as one third of all birds and mammals, are highly endangered. Besides climate change, the loss of biodiversity constitutes the most important global environmental threat and urgently demands increased attention.

The Federal Government is committed to the protection of biodiversity. Its goal is to initiate measures in all sectors aimed at preserving biodiversity, ensuring habitat connectivity and coherence, and promoting structural diversity. Cross-sectoral protection of biodiversity demands coherent instruments and clearly defined objectives. In its EU Biodiversity Strategy, presented on 20 May 2020, the European Commission reacted to the drastic loss of habitats and biodiversity and addressed the main causes of the loss of biological diversity, such as non-sustainable land and sea use, overexploitation of natural resources, environmental pollution and invasive alien species.

On the way forward, a great deal will depend on the practice-oriented and ambitious implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which must be based on a comprehensive,

though still outstanding, impact assessment by the European Commission drawing on public consultations and the identification of the ecological, social and economic impacts. The Strategy must be such as to underpin the security of food supply and self-sufficiency, reducing Europe's dependence on imports from third countries with lower production standards. Moreover, the economic advantages of the EU Biodiversity Strategy should be highlighted, as European investments have the potential to generate sustainable added value both for nature and for local employment and business opportunities.

Furthermore, the Members of the Austrian Parliament are in favour of the European Union supporting the inclusion of the proposed elements of the Biodiversity Strategy in the international negotiations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the 2021 Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and advocating the provision of more financial resources for biodiversity-friendly measures in the fields of European trade and development cooperation, but without harming biological diversity in the pursuit of its policies.